DC UNIVERSE REBIRTH

BATMAN BEYOND

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IGN

VOL.1 ESCAPING THE GRAVE

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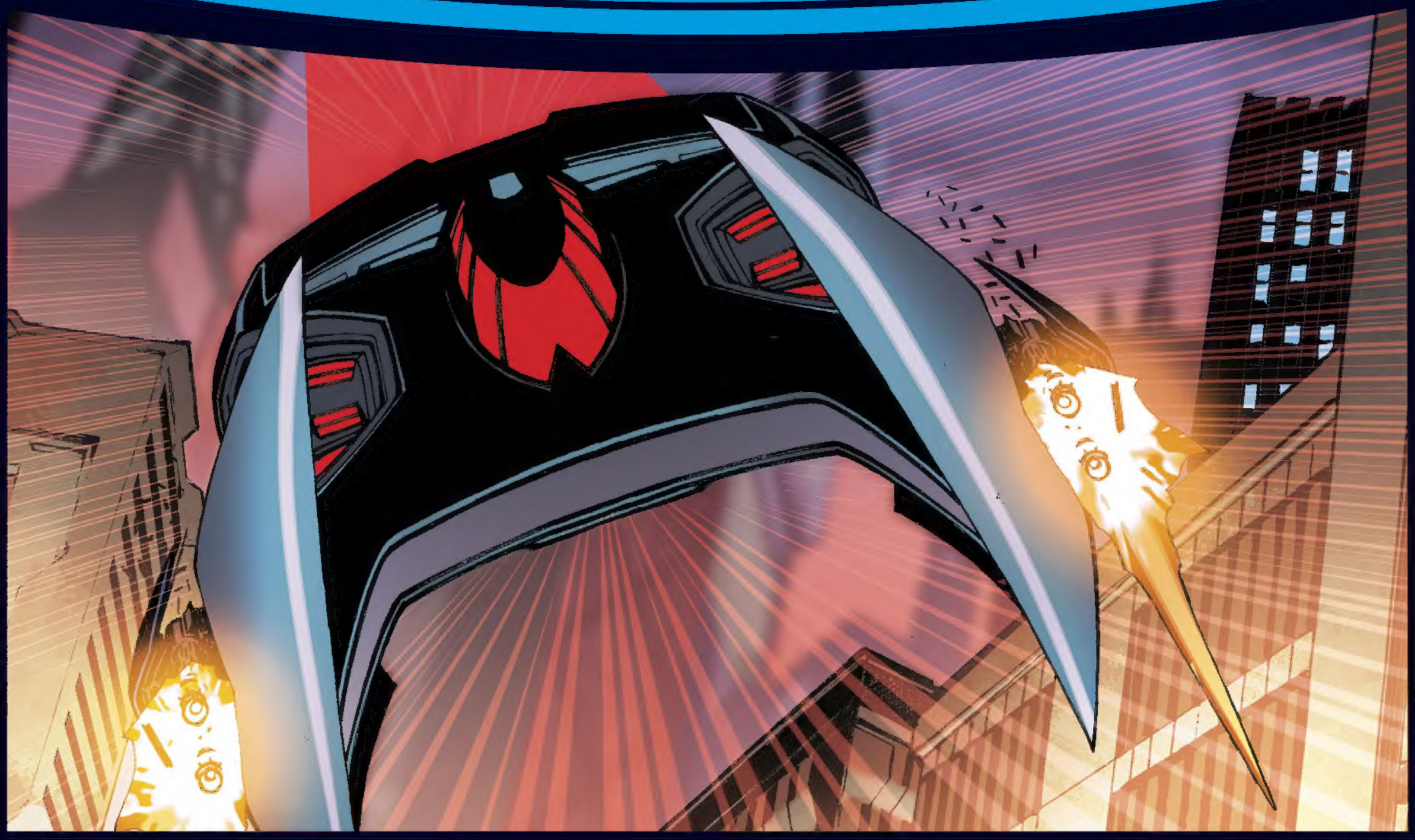

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BATMAN BEYOND VOLUME 1: ESCAPING THE GRAVE

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SEVERAL DECADES FROM NOW.

My name is Terry McGinnis.

This city is my home.

PLEASE! PLEASE DON'T HURT THEM!

Neo-Gotham.

Old-timers still call it Gotham City.

THESE CHILDREN!

THEY'RE NO THREAT TO YOU!

Probably have too much history to latch onto the "Neo" part of it.

HURT 'EM? WE WANNA TURN 'EM INTO CASH, SWEET CHEEKS!

TAKES MONEY TO SUPPORT THE MAN.

'Course, a lot of that history is bad.

YESYES YESSS.

JOKERZ MOVIN' UP.

JOKERZ TAKIN' OVER.

Goes back to when Batman first wore the mask.

These days, the mask is mine.

I'm Batman.

HEY, DREGS.

YOU'RE WORKIN' SCHOOL BUSES NOW?

LOW.

EVEN BY JOKERZ STANDARDS.

ESCAPING THE GRAVE

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TRAVIS LANHAM letters

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BUH-- BATMAN?

YOU REMEMBER ME.

I'M TOUCHED.

These clowns worship the ways of the original.

I'LL GIVE YOU TOUCHED!

Nutty, yeah.

Cha

Chak

But this level of extreme is **new.**

NO--!

CHAK

Used to be all they wanted was **chaos.**

Why the interest in money?

What's changed?

LET'S PLAY JACK-IN-THE-BOX.

SKASSH

No matter what, they're dangerous.

Learned that when we mixed it up the first time.

Back when I was a typical high school kid.

Typical parents, typical kid brother and typical attitude.

All of that changed the night Dana Tan and I were confronted by Jokerz.

Before long, I was on a cycle, leading them out of town and away from Dana.

Not like I had a real plan.

Or any idea of how I'd get them off my back.

In reality, my only hope was fate intervening.

Which is pretty much what happened.

LOOK OUT!

YOUNG FOOL.

An old man, on a forgotten, lonely road.

Barely swerved in time.

Lucky for me he wasn't just any old man.

Bruce Wayne.

I was okay at handling myself--

--but he was in a class all his own.

Had fifty years on those losers.

It was still over in seconds.

NGH.

HARD...TO BREATHE...

C'MON. LET'S GET YOU HOME.

Should've called an ambulance, but he refused.

Helped him with his meds and he fell right to sleep.

I was heading for the door when fate intervened again.

A bat.

Trapped in the clock.

Tried to free it...

...and found what the clock was really hiding.

A stairway.

To the most wondrous cave in the world.

And conclusive proof that the old man sleeping upstairs wasn't just anyone.

Bruce Wayne was **Batman.**

A very schway discovery, until Wayne showed up.

Threw me out.

That's where the story should have ended.

But it didn't.

HE THINKS HE CAN *BEAT* US!

PROVES BAT'S NOT SO SMART!

STAY DOWN.

YOU THINK THE METAL WILL STOP THEIR BLASTERS?

NO.

JUST NEED A CLEAR SHOT.

SWIP

SWIP

WHUP

That night, by the time I got home from Wayne's...

FIPT

...I found our place ransacked.

Even worse...

...my father was dead. Murdered.

Evidence pointing to the Jokerz turned out to be a ruse.

I wanted the real killer.

Begged Bruce to put the suit back on and find him.

He refused.

Said he was done being Batman.

But Batman flew anyway.

I swiped the suit and went after the killers.

Bruce coached me from the sidelines--grudgingly at first--and I took down my father's killer.

From that night forward...

...I was Batman.

JOKERZ SECURED, NOT SO MUCH AS A SCRATCH ON THE KIDS.

YOU HAVEN'T MISSED A BEAT.

THANKS, COMMISSIONER.

WEIRD NOT HAVING BRUCE IN MY EAR THOUGH. DROVE ME NUTS, BUT I STILL MISS HIM.

SEEMS LIKE THE JOKERZ HAVE GOTTEN MORE DANGEROUS.

WE'RE WORKING TO GET A HANDLE ON THAT. AND CALL ME *BARBARA.*

WE'VE HEARD WHISPERS OF A PLACE CALLED *JOKERZ TOWN.*

SOUTHWEST SECTION OF THE CITY.

BUT WHENEVER WE MOVE IN, THE JOKERZ LOSE THE MAKEUP AND BLEND IN.

HOW'S LIFE OUTSIDE THE SUIT? GETTING EVERYTHING BACK TOGETHER?

WITH MATT AND MAX, YEAH.

I HAVEN'T CONNECTED WITH DANA YET. IT'LL BE KIND OF WEIRD.

SHE DOESN'T KNOW YOU'RE *ALIVE?*

TERRY, YOU CAN'T--

WAIT.

HA

THAT *LAUGH--!*

HAHAHAHAHAHA!

HAHAHAH

"...IN BEING *BATMAN.*"

I DON'T *NEED* AN ESCORT.

YOU DO IN GOTHAM MS. TAN.

YOU SOCIAL WORKERS MIGHT THINK THESE ANIMALS ARE SALVAGEABLE, BUT THEY AIN'T.

TAKE AWAY HOPE AND ANYONE CAN FALL INTO A PIT, OFFICER.

IT'S MY JOB TO HELP GET THEM *OUT* OF THAT PIT.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

MRS. ORTIZ? I'M DANA TAN, GOTHAM SERVICES FOR ALL.

I'M HERE TO--

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME.

IT ISN'T *SAFE.*

YEEP!

KLONK

SPONG

YOU DON'T *BELONG* HERE, DEARIE.

WHAT DEAR OLD JUANITA WAS GOING TO SAY IS THAT THIS--

--IS *JOKERZ TOWN!*

COME AROUND TELLING FOLKS YOU CAN *HELP* AND THOSE PEOPLE MIGHT TURN AWAY FROM THE *BOSS.*

WHICH THE BOSS WON'T TOLERATE.

KRAKOK

SO YOU'RE COMIN' WITH *US.*

NO!

YES.

CUZ YOU GOTTA ANSWER TO THE *MAN.*

AND BECAUSE *YOU* WERE SMART ENOUGH TO TELL US SHE WAS COMIN'...

PAY-DAY!

YOU SAVED A SCHOOL BUS FULL OF KIDS?

ULTIMATE *SCHWAY!*

WHAT'S *SCHWAY* IS THAT THE KIDS ARE SAFE, MATT.

THAT'S ALWAYS MY PRIORITY.

YOU ACED IT, TERRY.

THAT'S WHAT REALLY KICKS.

WHAT KICKS IS BEING BACK.

NICE HAVING A KID BROTHER TO HANG WITH AGAIN.

ESPECIALLY SINCE IT'S JUST US NOW.

WE LOST DAD YEARS AGO AND MOM DIED IN THE WAR.

IF NOT FOR MAX GIBSON TAKING YOU IN WHILE I WAS GONE...

YOU WOULDA IF NOT FOR SPELLBINDER LOCKING YOU DOWN.

YOU'RE HERE NOW AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.

YEAH.
TERRY? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE *HERE.*
SOMETHING WRONG, MAX?
IT'S DANA!
THE *JOKERZ* HAVE HER!
NEWZ BUZZ
SECURITY CAMERA CAPTURES WOMAN'S ABDUCTION
WHAT DO THE JOKERZ WANT WITH *DANA?*
'NET CHATTER IS ALL ABOUT THEM WANTING TO RUN GOTHAM!
OR AS THEY CALL IT--
I'VE HEARD.
JOKERZ TOWN.

THAT NAME DIES TODAY.

Back in high school, Dana and I were close.

But as Batman became a bigger part of my life...

...Dana became less important.

When Spellbinder took me off the board, leading everyone to think I was dead...

...she moved on.

By the time I came back, I didn't know what to say to her.

What do I do? Walk up to her and say, "Hey, I'm back from the grave. Oh, and by the way...

"...I'm Batman."

Now she's down here, working in the old part of town.

The part the elite don't talk about.

The part they close their eyes to.

Where people don't live in the sky.

Where poverty, crime and abandonment keep it from moving forward.

BOOM

THE JOKERZ.

WHERE ARE THEY?

NOT TALKIN'!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEAR ME.

AIN'T AFRAID O' YOU!

AFRAID O' HIM!

YOU.

YOU DON'T LOOK FUN.

WHAM

LIKE YOU DON'T *LAUGH* ENOUGH!

UH!

I CAN *HELP* WITH THAT!

TEACH YOU TO--*HA HAH*--

--LAUGH THROUGH THE PAIN!

CUZ IF YOU CAN LAUGH THROUGH *PAIN*--

--*EXTREME* PAIN--

--YOU CAN LAUGH THROUGH *ANYTHING!*

HA HA HA

THE MAN I'M RAISING FROM THE *DEAD.*

The JOKER.

SEVERAL DECADES FROM NOW

My friend, Dana Tan, is being held by the Jokerz.

I don't know the exact circumstances--but it can't be good.

ANSWER MY QUESTION.

WHO IS GOTHAM'S MOST INFLUENTIAL CITIZEN *EVER?*

ESCAPING THE GRAVE: BATMAN BEYOND

DAN JURGENS writer BERNARD CHANG artist MARCELO MAIOLO colorist
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THAT'S EASY, CARTER. IT'S--

BATMAN?

WRONG, DANA. AND I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME TERMINAL!

THE CORRECT ANSWER IS MY MAIN MAN, HERE.

A DEAD MAN WHO'LL BE THE FIRST PERSON EVER BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE...

THE JOKER!

I was gone for a few months.

In my absence...

...the Jokerz took over a whole neighborhood.

HAH AHAH hah

JOKE SHOP

EXPLODIN (really) CIGARS

They call it...

...Jokerz Town.

RIDICULOUS.

IF NOT FOR *BATMAN*, WHO'S STILL *HERE*...

...GOTHAM WOULD HAVE DISINTEGRATED *YEARS* AGO.

YO, YO, YO.

WE THE TOLL BOOTH.

AN' YOU DIDN'T *PAY.*

DON'T OVERLOOK THE OBVIOUS.

WHO INSPIRED A LEGION OF FOLLOWERS?

WHO DOES EVERYONE *REALLY* WANT TO *BE?*

THE JOKER.

SO YOU PAY *NOW.*

WHO DO WE REALLY WISH TO BE WHEN WE WANT TO KILL OUR *BOSS*...

...*SPOUSE*...

...*NEIGHBOR*...

...OR THE EVIL *LIBRARIAN* THAT HIT US WITH AN OVERDUE FINE?

WHY, *THE JOKER,* OF COURSE.

WITH YOUR *LIFE.*

SO--HE *MUST* LIVE AGAIN.

PEOPLE THINK THEY SHOULD BE BATMAN--DOING THE RIGHT THING AND SUFFERING FOR IT...

...WHEN IT'S THE *JOKER* THAT *TRULY* INHABITS OUR SOULS.

YOU'RE *CRAZY* TO THINK YOU CAN REVIVE HIM!

MY DEAR MS. TAN, WE ARE ALL ABOUT *CRAZY.*

WHAT BETTER JOKE COULD BE PLAYED ON GOTHAM THAN REVIVING *THE JOKER?!*

Dana's plight wasn't the only thing on my mind.

My kid brother, Matt, was breaking protocol in a big way.

THIS WAY, MAX!

YOU'RE FREAKING ME OUT, MATT. WHERE *ARE* WE?

I WAS SWORN TO SECRECY SO WE HAVE TO DO THIS MY WAY, OKAY?

THAT EXPLAINS THE BLINDFOLD BUT IT'S STILL *WEIRD.*

YOU WANNA FIND *DANA,* DON'T YOU?

AND TRACK TERRY WHILE HE'S LOOKIN' FOR HER?

NONE OF WHICH EXPLAINS THE FREAKY *BLINDFOLD.*

WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

SEE?

YEAH.

I DO.

TERRY'S COSTUME HAS A BUNCHA SENSORS AND STUFF THAT'LL LET US SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO!

AND TALK TO HIM, TOO!

UH-OH...

TROUBLE?

BATMAN'S *LAIR.*

TALK ABOUT *SCHWAY.*

THE SIGNALS WE'RE GETTING ARE *WEAK.*

REALLY WEAK.

SUMTHIN'S *WRONG.*

"LAIR"?

WHAT KIND OF WORD IS "LAIR"?

THIS IS THE *BATCAVE!*

Wrong? Yeah, something is wrong, all right.

Namely, a few tons of rubble piled on top of me.

I thought being Batman was supposed to be **fun.**

I mean, who wouldn't want to fly, hang with the Justice League and drive the schwayest rig ever built?

Anyone with a brain, that's who.

Can't **move.**

Can barely **breathe.**

Some massive **Jokerz** dreg put me here.

And right now...

...I have no idea how to get out.

I can hear him up there.

Laughing.

Waiting for me to die.

TERRY? CAN--BZZT-- HEAR ME?

MATT?

COME IN--BZZT-- RY.

He can't hear me.

Probably terrified that I'm dead.

LET'S SET IT ON FIRE!

BURN HIM!

Explosive charges.

And... what feels like a pipe.

if I drop 'em in...

Like I'd give these creeps the satisfaction.

...they might just end up...

...where they can do some good...

GET THE TORCH.

...and not kill me.

HA!

...and they go far enough down...

IF it's fireworks they want...

Gyahh!

It actually...

...worked?

Don't know if I'm lucky or good.

I'll take it-- either way.

SIGNALS ARE COMING IN STRONG AND WE HAVE A PICTURE!

GO GET 'EM, BRO!

TEAR 'EM UP!

FREE?

BAH!

HEY, I MAY NOT SPORT THE LATEST IN JOKERZ WEAR LIKE YOU FASHION PLATES...

KRAKT

...BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO *BURY* ME--

OWW! WHAT'RE YOU *MADE* OF?

GONNA MAKE TOOTH-PICKS OUTTA YER SPINE.

GUESS THAT'S A *YES.*

BRAM

YOU WOULDN'T HIT A MAN WITH GLASSES, WOULD YOU?

What was I thinking?

Had my shot--

YOU BLEW IT.

What he said.

I KNOW A *JOKE* WHEN I SEE ONE.

AN' YOU FIT THE BILL.

GUH!

HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?

THAT MONSTER'S BACKPACK AMPS HIM UP SOMEHOW.

WORSE-- TERRY ISN'T SHARP.

OUT OF SHAPE.

SPELLBINDER HAD HIM UNDER CONTROL FOR SO LONG...

"...THAT THERE'S BOUND TO BE SOME RESIDUAL EFFECT!"

Head spinning.

Hard to think straight.

DIDN'T LIKE THAT SHOT TO THE RIBS, DIDJA?

LET'S FIX THAT.

SQUEEZE THOSE SUCKERS RIGHT OUTTA YOU!

NGGH!

I wasn't ready for this.

Haven't trained in weeks.

Reflexes and reaction time out of whack.

Can't just roll out of bed and be **Batman.**

Takes **work.**

SHIPP

Preparation.

One chance.

That blender of his...

...has to go.

DRINK

HAH--?

IZZZZT

WITHOUT THE JUICE...

SHRIPP

...BAHHH...

...YOU'RE NOTHING.

You're lucky, McG.

BRANNG

No way you should be walking away from--

KILL THE BAT!

KILL THE BAT!

KILL THE BAT!

I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.

KILL THE BAT!

KILL THE BAT!

KILL THE BAT!

FOR WHAT? A GRAND-PRIZE TRIP TO PARIS?

YOU'D *HATE* IT.

THE MIMES WOULDN'T APPRECIATE YOUR HUMOR.

PLITCH

AH!

TAKE HIM!

OUTTA THE WAY! I *WANT* HIM!

NO! HE'S MINE!

SLICE 'IM!
DICE 'IM!
KILL THE BAT!
TEAR HIM APART!
GUT HIM!
KILL THE BAT!
KILL THE BAT!
KILL THE BAT!!!
How the hell many of these guys are there?
No wonder they call it...
...Jokerz town!

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!

I KNOW.

I JUST DON'T KNOW *WHAT.*

This neighborhood...

...must be hundreds...

HOLD HIM!

DO IT!

...maybe thousands of them.

SHRAKKT

How do I beat them all?

No matter how many I put down...

...twice as many replace 'em!

GOT HIM!

CARVE HIM UP!

A *PRESENT* FOR THE *BOSS!*

No way to win.

Nothing I can do...

...but run.

...and just about lost 'em.

Have to be better.

Smarter.

WE DID IT!

SENT THE BAT RUNNIN'!

JOKERZ TOWN RULES!

AAH!

NOOO!

Last few months were the worst of my life.

I went through hell to get the wings back...

WHY'D WE LOSE THE PICTURE?

THE WAY THOSE MANIACS CUT UP HIS SUIT...

...THE COMM SYSTEM WAS PROBABLY SHREDDED.

HOW COULD TERRY LET 'EM *DO* THAT?

I THOUGHT HE WAS... BETTER.

GIVE HIM A BREAK, MATT. THE ODDS WERE OVERWHELMING.

NO.

I WASN'T *READY.*

I TREATED IT LIKE A *ROMP.*

LIKE I HAD IT IN THE BAG.

INSTEAD OF RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF IT ALL AND DEALING WITH IT LIKE BRUCE TAUGHT ME.

BRUCE...?

WAYNE.

USED TO BE BATMAN, BUT HE DIED IN THE EYE'S FIRST WAVE OF ATTACKS.

UH...ISN'T THAT S'POSED TO BE A SECRET?

WE CAN TRUST MAX.

BESIDES, *DANA* IS OUR MAIN CONCERN.

HAVE TO PRAY I DIDN'T PUT HER IN MORE DANGER BY GOING IN WITHOUT A PLAN.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO HER, IT'S ON *ME.*

MAYBE THIS IS ONE TIME BATMAN CAN'T DO THE JOB.

DON'T *SAY* THAT!

WHY NOT?

IT'S TRUE.

COUPLE THOUSAND JOKER WANNABES?

THAT'S BEYOND *BATMAN.*

BUT--

NOT NOW.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

MY BROTHER IS A *QUITTER.*

NO, MATT. THE SUIT IS SHREDDED. AND THE NUMBERS...

YOU HEARD HIM, MAX.

HE SAID BATMAN COULDN'T *WIN.*

NOT QUITE.

I SAID BATMAN COULDN'T *FIGHT* THEM.

YOU *CANNOT* BE SERIOUS.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY.

IF YOU CAN'T *BEAT* 'EM--

--*JOIN* 'EM.

DECADES FROM NOW.

I APOLOGIZE FOR KEEPING YOU TIED UP, DANA, BUT I'M A BIT BUSY RIGHT NOW.

AND I DON'T WANT YOU RUNNING OFF.

BUSY?

THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A MEDICAL PROCEDURE TO ME, CARTER.

DEET

I'VE *TOLD* YOU NOT TO CALL ME THAT.

I'M *TERMINAL.*

IDENTITY *CONFIRMED.*

TRANSFER INITIATED.

YOU'RE STILL CARTER WILSON TO ME.

EX-HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE THAT THINKS NOTHING OF KIDNAPPING OLD FRIENDS.

WE *WEREN'T* FRIENDS.

YOUR SUPERIORITY COMPLEX MADE SURE OF THAT.

BRINGING THE *JOKER* BACK TO LIFE IS CRAZY ENOUGH, BUT YOU SEEM TO BE STEALING FROM HIM, TOO.

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I DOUBT HE'D MIND, DANA.

HE HAS RESERVES ALL OVER THE GLOBE AND I'M SURE HE'D UNDERSTAND...

...THAT REVIVING THE DEAD IS *EXPENSIVE.*

NOT TO MENTION *IMPOSSIBLE.*

THE JOKER IS *DEAD,* CARTER.

HAS BEEN FOR *YEARS.*

LONG AGO, SUPERMAN DIED AND RETURNED, DANA.

THERE'S NO REASON HE SHOULD BE THE ONLY ONE TO DO SO.

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE TECHNOLOGY WE NOW HAVE.

RESTORING LIFE TO ONE OF THE GREATS?

I *WILL* MAKE IT HAPPEN!

I WAS A KID WHEN IT HAPPENED, BUT I REMEMBER THE STORY.

THERE'S *NO WAY* THAT CAN BE *HIM!*

YOU *THINK* YOU KNOW THE STORY.

THE TRUTH OF WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED...

"...IS TESTAMENT TO THE MAN'S *GENIUS.*"

ESCAPING THE GRAVE: UNDER COVER

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"APPROPRIATELY ENOUGH, IT HAPPENED IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

"GOTHAM WAS VIRTUALLY PARALYZED BY A SNOWSTORM.

"A *DIRTY BOMB* WAS SET TO GO OFF AND ONLY ONE MAN SEEMED ABLE TO STOP IT.

"JUST AS ONLY ONE MAN COULD HAVE PLANTED IT."

ALL THIS PRETTY *WHITE.*

SO QUIET. SO PEACEFUL.

I *HATE* QUIET AND PEACEFUL!

SO, I'LL *CHANGE* IT!

OUT OF SERVICE

MAKE A *MESS* OF THINGS!

"NEWS REPORTS VARY ON THE SPECIFICS, BUT THE ONE THING THEY AGREED ON--

"--IS THAT BATMAN PROBABLY PUSHED HIS ARM FORWARD...

BRAMM

"...*INTENTIONALLY* BREAKING MULTIPLE BONES IN HIS HAND."

"A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE DESPERATE TACTICS NEEDED TO *WIN.*

"IT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD FREE HIMSELF!

NNN...

...NYAHH!

"NO ONE COULD STOP THAT TRUCK.

DAMN IT.

"NOT WITHOUT KILLING THE *BAT,* ANYWAY.

POLICE

NO CLEAR SHOT.

MY OLD FRIEND *BARBARA.*

BUT *HELL* HASN'T FROZEN OVER *YET.*

YOU *WON'T* STOP *ME.*

VRRMMM

MOVE!

IT MIGHT BE *COLD.*

BRASH

NGH...

BRUCE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NO.

CHOOF

PRANG

GUH!

I *KNEW* THAT WOULDN'T STOP YOU.

IT'S THE *GAME* THAT MAKES THIS WORTHWHILE.

THE BACK-AND-FORTH OF IT ALL!

FINDING THE LIMITS.

YOURS--

CHAK CHAK

--AND MINE.

CHAK

SSH.

WHERE--?

IF YOU AREN'T BACK THERE...

THANK *GOD.*

TOOF

OH.

"GOTHAMITES WERE SNUGGLED IN THEIR BEDS, WAITING FOR SOME FAT OLD ELF WITH TOYS...

SKTASSH

"...UNAWARE THAT THE DEADLIEST OF DEVICES WAS IN THEIR MIDST.

"MEANWHILE, A STRUGGLE OF EPIC PROPORTIONS WAS PLAYING ITSELF OUT.

"A CONTEST OF TRUE EQUALS.

"ONE, THE AGENT OF DIVINE CHAOS.

"THE OTHER, AN AGENT OF A STODGY STATUS QUO."

"IT COULD HAVE ENDED WHEN THE BAT RETRIEVED THE DETONATOR.

"BUT THAT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A PROPER CONCLUSION.

"IT WAS THE TYPE OF NIGHT THAT NEEDED A *FINAL* OUTCOME."

WHRRR

WHRRRRR

RRRRRR

HEH.

HEH.

HAAA.

"THE TRAIN'S SNOWBLOWER CHEWED RIGHT THROUGH THE ENGINE AND CAB BEFORE IT FINALLY CAME TO A STOP.

SKA-RUNNK

"THE FALLING SNOW GAVE WAY...

...TO A HAIL OF SHREDDED METAL...

...AND...MORE GRUESOME MATTER.

IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY THE WORLD CONCLUDED THE JOKER WAS DEAD.

"THAT THERE WASN'T ENOUGH LEFT TO BURY."

EXACTLY!

I READ THAT TISSUE AND BLOOD TESTS *PROVED* WHATEVER MEAGER REMAINS WERE LEFT BELONGED TO *THE JOKER!*

"WHAT IF THAT'S WHAT HE *WANTED* EVERYONE TO THINK, DANA?

CRAZY TALK.

CRAZY IS HIS *SPECIALTY!*

SUPPOSE THAT EVEN AS THE TRUCK WAS BEING CHEWED TO BITS--

--HE GOT OUT.

"BLOODIED WOUNDED AND *ALMOST* DEAD.

"WITH WOUNDS SO GRIEVOUS THAT THERE WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH MATERIAL AND BLOOD FOR THE FORENSICS CREW TO FIND."

SUPPOSE, AS WELL, THAT BATMAN NEVER KNEW THE JOKER HAD A CREW FOLLOWING THE TRUCK.

THEY GOT TO THE JOKER AND SPIRITED HIM AWAY, GETTING HIM TO A CRYOGENIC CHAMBER BEFORE HE COULD ACTUALLY DIE.

WHERE HE REMAINED FOR YEARS, UNTIL I FOUND HIM.

YEAH?

SURE, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PUT INTO DEEP FREEZE, BUT NO ONE HAS BEEN BROUGHT BACK!

UNTIL *NOW.*

WHO BETTER THAN THE *JOKER...*

*...TO BE THE *FIRST* TO LIVE *TWICE?*

JUST GOT WORD FROM THE BOYS OUTSIDE, BOSS.

THE *BAT...*

"...IS HERE."

BREET

BREET

THE BATMOBILE!

USE EVERYTHING YOU GOT!

WHOOM

PAK PAK

BRING IT DOWN!

BRAKA-CHAKA-CHAKT

WHA-HOO! THIS IS SCHWAY!

IT WON'T BE IF WE DON'T TAKE EVASIVE ACTION.

BRA-KOWW

MOVE OUT!

LOOK OUT, MAX!

SORRY, MATT. NOT LIKE I'VE HAD A LOT OF PRACTICE BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THIS THING, YOU KNOW.

YOU'RE DOING *FINE!*

MAYBE-- AS LONG YOU LIKE TOTAL INSANITY.

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL GET IF YOU THROW AN ELABORATE SCHEME LIKE THIS TOGETHER IN THIRTY SECONDS!

IT'S A GOOD PLAN, MAX!

MAYBE SO, BUT IT'S *UNREHEARSED,* KID. THAT'S WHAT GETS PEOPLE KILLED.

JUST GOT WORD FROM MY BROTHER. SAYS HE'S IN POSITION AND WE'RE GOOD TO GO TO STEP TWO.

HOLD TIGHT, MATT. NO REHEARSAL--

--AND OUR TIMING HAS TO BE *PERFECT.*

JOKER'S

HE'S COMIN'.

SHRIPPT

GOT ME ONCE.

WON'T TWICE.

LOOK!

I SEE HIM. IT'S THE BIG MOOK THAT ALMOST KILLED TERRY.

CAN YOU TAKE HIM OUT?

WE AREN'T HERE TO TAKE ANYONE OUT, KID.

WE'RE HERE FOR EFFECT.

CHAKKA CHAKKA

YOU MISSED!

I WON'T!

BRAMM

THAT WAS CLOSE.

NOT CLOSE ENOUGH, MAX!

THIS IS WORKIN' *GREAT!*

SO MAYBE TERRY WON'T EVEN NEED TO DO HIS THING!

EASE UP ON THE YOUTHFUL OPTIMISM, MATT.

WHADDAYA MEAN?

TAKE A LOOK.

FIVE SECONDS.

IF YOU'RE STILL HERE...

...SHE *DIES.*

WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

YOU'RE LETTING HIM GO?

NO WAY YOU'LL BRING THAT DREG DOWN WITH THE POPGUNS YOU BEEN USING.

A FRIEND.

ONE WITH A TOY THAT *RIPS.*

LINE HIM UP...

TERRY STARTED!

YEAH.

WHO--?

READY...

I'M ALL SET, BRO.

TOOF

DO IT!

DON'T WAIT TOO LONG, MATTY!

I KNOW, I KNOW! GOTTA TIME THIS PERFECT SO--

BWHOOM

YOU--

GOT HIM.

RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB, MAN.

THAT WAS SO GOOD!

THE FIREWORKS PACKAGE LOOKED LIKE A REAL EXPLOSION!

MADE IT LOOK LIKE THAT MISSILE WAS *LIVE!*

DROPPING IT NOW!

READY WITH THE SECOND PACKAGE?

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

IT CAN'T-- BE THAT EASY.

CHOOM

YOU'RE SAYING THE *BAT* BAILED?

MAYBE.

MAYBE NOT.

UH.

EITHER WAY, HE AIN'T CRAWLING UP YOUR SHORTS, AN' THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.

HOLD ON, TINY.

WHO'S THE NEW GUY?

NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.

A FRIEND.

BEEN IN CRIMINAL MODIFICATION THERAPY.

JUST GOT OUT AND WANTED TO JOIN THE PARTY.

NO ONE GETS TO DROP IN OUT OF NOWHERE AND CLAIM HE'S IN THE CLUB.

LIKE I SAID--BEEN LOCKED UP.

FIGURED MY LAST NAME MIGHT HELP OPEN THE CLUBHOUSE DOORS.

YEAH?

WHAT MIGHT THAT NAME BE?

TREY MALONE.

YOU MUST'VE HEARD OF MY OLD MAN.

MOST PEOPLE CALLED HIM MATCHES.

WORKED JUST ABOUT EVERY ANGLE THERE WAS.

DIDN'T KNOW MATCHES HAD A KID.

THAT *VOICE*...

CAN IT POSSIBLY BE--?

BUT IF THAT'S WHO YOU ARE--*WELCOME* TO THE *JOKERZ.*

SCHWAY.

TERRY?!

ALIVE?!

Joker Rules

Joker Rules

DECADES FROM NOW

HURRY, MAX!

WE GOTTA LINK WITH TERRY AND GET HIM ON SCREEN!

HE'S WALKED INTO THAT NEST OF PSYCHOS-- UNPROTECTED!

IF ANYONE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF, IT'S YOUR BROTHER.

EVEN WITHOUT THE *SUIT?*

GOOD POINT.

IT'S *SHREDDED.*

BEYOND MY ABILITY TO REPAIR, MATT.

THERE'S *NUTHIN'* YOU CAN DO?

I CAN FIX A LOT BUT THE MAN THAT PUT THIS TOGETHER--

BRUCE WAYNE.

--WELL, HE OPERATED ON A MUCH HIGHER LEVEL THAN ME.

STILL, THIS *IS* THE *BATCAVE.*

GIVEN EVERYTHING THAT'S HERE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH *SOMETHING* THAT'LL HELP TERRY.

HOW 'BOUT THE COMPUTER FILES?

MAYBE THERE'S SOME KINDA WEAPONS LOG.

GOOD IDEA. MAYBE WE CAN...

HELLO.

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

MY NAME IS DANA TAN.

I'M CURRENTLY THE CAPTIVE OF MY OLD HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATE, CARTER WILSON, A.K.A. ***TERMINAL.***

A MEMORABLE LIFE EVENT IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

UNTIL SOMETHING BIGGER CAME ALONG.

SO YOU'RE MATCHES MALONE'S KID.

SURPRISED I NEVER HEARD OF YOU.

'TIL NOW, I LIKED WORKIN' ALONE.

THAT'S BECAUSE MALONE IS A FAKE NAME.

I'M PRETTY SURE HE'S MY OLD BOYFRIEND, ***TERRY MCGINNIS.*** MEMORABLE LIFE EVENT NUMBER TWO...

...BECAUSE EVERYONE THOUGHT HE WAS ***DEAD.***

ESCAPING THE GRAVE: REVELATIONS

DAN JURGENS writer **BERNARD CHANG** artist **MARCELO MAIOLO** colorist
TRAVIS LANHAM letters **CHANG & MAIOLO** cover
ROB LEVIN assistant editor **JIM CHADWICK** editor

PLUS, LIKE I BEEN SAYIN', I WAS LOCKED UP.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME AND HE'S DISGUISING HIS VOICE, BUT HE CAN'T FOOL ME.

THAT'S *TERRY.*

FOR THE ENTIRE WAR?

WORKED OUT OKAY.

THREE SQUARES A DAY AND I DIDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT CYBORGS.

I *LIKE* DIS GUY, HERE.

GOTS A GOOD OUTLOOK.

I DON'T KNOW HOW HE CAME TO BE HERE...

...OR WHERE HE WAS ALL THIS TIME...

...BUT IT'S PUT ME IN A TAILSPIN.

BACK IN THE DAY... WE WERE *CLOSE.*

WE DRIFTED APART AS TERRY BECAME OCCUPIED BY OTHER THINGS...

...BUT I NEVER STOPPED CARING ABOUT HIM.

I'D THINK THAT MATCHES WOULD HAVE INTRODUCED YOU TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

NAH, HE DITCHED US WHEN I WAS A TODDLER.

MALONE DID HAVE A WAY OF DISAPPEARING FOR STRETCHES.

DIDN'T WANT TO BE NABBED BY THE COPS OR THE BAT.

BUT *WHY* IS TERRY *HERE?*

TO *HELP ME?*

OR IS HE REALLY...*ONE OF THEM?*

SEE, I FIGURE I CAN HELP YOU OUT.

YOU SAW ME TAKE DOWN BATMAN'S SCOOTER, RIGHT?

SCHWAY.

SCHWAYEST OF ALL.

YOU THINK THREE SECONDS OF SERVICE BUYS YOU A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP TO THIS *ELITE CLUB?*

SHOULD BE A GOOD START.

YOU GOT SUMTHIN' BETTER IN MIND, LET ME KNOW.

WHAT DOES EVERYONE ELSE SAY?

I SAY LET HIM IN.

ABSOLUTELY!

I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

WHAT I *DO* KNOW IS THAT NO ONE IS WATCHING.

SIGN HIM UP!

AFTER HE BUYS A COUPLE ROUNDS!

HEY.

WE BEEN DUMPED.

SHE'S ALL YOURS, MONSTER MAN.

WIT' PLEASURE.

HEY.

LET ME SHOW YOU MY TALENTS.

I GOT THIS.

NOT *ALONE*, YOU DON'T.

EVERYONE ON THE STREETS!

NOW!

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF *JOKERZ TOWN.*

IT'S LIKE BEING BEHIND ENEMY LINES!

HAVE TO STEER CLEAR OF THEM.

HOPE I CAN SNEAK OUT, FIND MATT AND TELL HIM HIS BROTHER IS--

--WHUH--?!

DANA.

HAVE YOU *LOST* YOUR *MIND?*

PLEASE, TERRY. I *KNOW* IT'S YOU.

DON'T *HURT* ME AND I--

I'M HERE TO *HELP!*

QUIET DOWN, PLAY ALONG SO WE CAN GET OUT OF THIS *ALIVE.*

LOOK! MALONE *FOUND* HER!

BLOOD TIME.

FAST OR SLOWWW?

GO AHEAD.

WHAAAT?!

BUT IF I WERE YOU, I'D ASK THE BOSS FIRST.

NEW GUY HAS A POINT.

THERE'S A REASON HE KEPT HER ALIVE UNTIL NOW.

LET HIM MAKE THE CALL.

WE GOT HER BACK, TERMINAL.

HOW BLESSED WE ARE TO HAVE SOMEONE SO TALENTED FALL INTO OUR LAPS.

TAKE HER UPSTAIRS, MR. MALONE.

MAKE SURE SHE CAN'T TRY THIS AGAIN.

YOU GOT IT, BOSS.

I'LL DO WHAT TERRY SAID AND PLAY ALONG.

FOR *NOW.*

THIS WAY.

BE SMART THIS TIME.

DON'T TRY NUTHIN'.

IT'S REALLY *YOU!*

YOU'RE *ALIVE!*

HOW--?

QUIET DOWN, OKAY? WE'RE DANCING ON THE EDGE OF A *KNIFE* HERE.

I NOTICED.

HOW IS THIS *POSSIBLE?*

WHERE HAVE YOU *BEEN?*

DANA, I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT WHEN THE TIME IS *RIGHT.*

FOR NOW, PLAY ALONG. LIKE YOU'RE REALLY *AFRAID* OF ME.

YOU THINK YOU CAN GET US OUT OF THIS NUTHOUSE? *ALONE?*

LET'S JUST SAY...

"...I'M NOT EXACTLY FLYING SOLO."

JOKERZ TOWN

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M ACTUALLY GOING TO LET YOU DO THIS.

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE, MAX.

WE BOTH KNOW THAT TERRY NEEDS THIS PACKAGE RIGHT AWAY.

AND IF YOU TRIED...

...THE JOKERZ'D BE ALL OVER YOU.

BUT THEY WON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT SOME LOST KID WANDERING AROUND.

BE CAREFUL. IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YOU, TERRY WILL KILL ME.

AW, I'LL BE *FINE.*

I JUST NEED YOU TO DISTRACT THEM FOR A SEC.

HEY! THEY CALL THIS *JOKERZ TOWN?* WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?

WHY NOT COME IN AND FIND OUT?

SORRY. EXCESSIVE MAKEUP ISN'T MY THING.

TOO BAD. YOU GOT THE HAIR FOR IT.

TERRY... I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S *YOU.*

LATER, OKAY?

THE PRIORITY NOW IS GETTING OUT OF THIS LOONY BIN.

IF YOU KNEW WHAT THE JOKERZ ARE REALLY UP TO--

WAIT. IF THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW, *TELL* ME.

TERMINAL'S PLAN IS SO COMPLETELY IMPLAUSIBLE THAT IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S SERIOUS.

REMEMBER HOW, BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL...

...CARTER FANCIED HIMSELF THE SMARTEST GUY EVER BORN?

HE'S OUT TO PROVE IT.

BY BRINGING A *DEAD MAN* BACK TO *LIFE.*

...

THAT'S... *THE JOKER?!*

YES.

CRYOGENICALLY PRESERVED BY HIS CREW, YEARS AGO, AFTER A FIGHT WITH BATMAN. DEAD NOW...

...BUT CARTER SAYS HE'S ON THE VERGE OF BRINGING HIM *BACK.*

REVIVE ONE OF THE MOST *HEINOUS* MEN *EVER?!*

WHY?!

WHY ELSE, MCGINNIS?

TO PROVE THAT I *CAN,* OF COURSE!

DID YOU *REALLY* THINK I WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE YOUR VOICE?

YOU *KNOW* HOW SMART I AM, MCGINNIS.

YOU WERE STUPID THEN...

...AND STUPID *NOW,* TO THINK I'D FALL FOR THAT.

I HATED YOU BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL.

IT WAS A HAPPY DAY WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE DEAD.

SKASSH

SO I HAVE TO WONDER WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY, TERRY?

ARE YOU A *COP?*

OR EVEN *MORE* OF A THREAT?

WHAT I AM, IS THE GUY WHO'S GOING TO *STOP YOU,* WILSON.

UH-UH.

NOT A COP.

YOU'RE WORKING...

"...WITH *BATMAN.*

"HELPED HIM WITH THAT RIDICULOUS STUNT...

"...TO SHOOT DOWN THE BATMOBILE."

SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA.

GOT ME CLOSE TO YOU, DIDN'T IT?!

KRAK

AND THERE'S *NO WAY* I'LL LET YOU BRING THE JOKER BACK TO LIFE!

WHY NOT?

IT'S THE GREATEST IDEA I'VE EVER HAD.

ONE THAT *EVERYONE* IN *JOKERZ TOWN* AGREES WITH.

THE KIND OF *CHAOS* HE'D--

UGH!

OURS'D BE *FUN* CHAOS.

PARTY, 24-7.

THIS IS THE MOST *SANE* THING I'VE EVER DONE.

IT'S A SHAME YOU WON'T LIVE TO SEE WHAT EMERGES FROM MY EFFORTS.

INSANITY.

I'VE *SEEN* CHAOS.

WE'RE REBUILDING FROM IT NOW.

TAKE THEM TO *THE WALL.*

MATT?

ANSWER ME, KID. I NEED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE OKAY.

I'M *FINE*, MAX.

GOTTA BE QUIET IS ALL.

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE, SONNY.

I'M THINKING THE *BOSS'D* LIKE TO TALK TO YOU.

GOTTA BE...

TERRY WOULD *NOT* WANT YOU *MESSING* WITH THE *JOKERZ!*

IT'S OKAY, MAX!

I'M ALMOST--

SOMEWHERE ELSE!

SPANG

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO'S--

HEY, SHORT STUFF.

UH... CAN'T NOW.

TURN AROUND AND *COME BACK!*

--OH NO!

MATT? WHAT'S WRONG?

PEBBLES READY?

ACID FILLED, MONSTER MAN.

LOAD 'EM UP...

...AND FIRE AWAY.

SPAKK

PAKT

AH!

HAFTA GET THIS BACKPACK TO TERRY--

--OR HE'S A GONER!

LEAVE.

YOU WANT I SHOULD CLEAN UP THE BAR?

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO AS LONG AS YOU'RE *NOT HERE.*

OKAY, OKAY.

SEE YA, BOSS.

I CAN'T LET HIM IN TO SEE YOU, MY FRIEND.

EVEN AN IDIOT LIKE HIM MIGHT PERCEIVE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE *ALIVE.*

IF ONLY YOU COULD APPRECIATE YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREATEST JOKE OF ALL TIME.

YOU'D APPRECIATE THE GENIUS OF IT.

IF YOU WEREN'T DRUGGED OUT OF YOUR MIND...

...UNABLE TO *TALK.*

THE JOKERZ BELIEVE I'M TRYING TO BRING THEIR *HERO*--

SCANNING.

--AND INSPIRATIONAL GURU BACK TO LIFE.

ACCESSING ACCOUNTS.

BECAUSE OF THAT, THESE SIMPLETONS THINK *I'M* THE GREATEST THING *EVER.*

WHAT THEY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND...

...IS THAT THE *JOKER* REALLY IS *DEAD.*

HAS BEEN FOR *YEARS.*

IN THEIR DELIRIUM, THEY DON'T REALIZE YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A PAINTED-UP, COMA INDUCED STAND-IN.

WHICH GIVES ME AN ARMY OF ENTHUSIASTIC ACOLYTES, WILLING TO DO WHATEVER I WANT.

FUNDS TRANSFERRING.

YOU HAVE MADE MY FUTURE ONE OF *LIMITLESS* POWER.

TRANSACTION COMPLETE. YOU HAVE RECEIVED PAYMENT FROM...

...BRUCE WAYNE.

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR ME, BRUCE.

THANKS TO YOU, *THE WORLD* WILL SOON BE *MINE.*

BRUCE WAYNE

What is the Joker's Deadly Secret?

TO CHANG

DEAD SUPER
WUPER

It's times like this when I notice the silence.

Not the noise around me. There's more than enough of that.

It's the radio voice in my ear I miss.

Bruce's voice.

Saying something like, "You messed up again, McGinnis."

Yeah, he was gruff.

Overly critical.

But he talked me through things like this.

SPAKK

TSSSSS

Taught me how to be **Batman.**

Made me **better.**

With **Bruce Wayne** guiding me, I felt like I could handle **anything.**

TERRY?!

THAT'S *ACID!*

GHUH!

PAPT

TSSSS

I'd give anything to have him back. Because, right now...

...I need all the help I can get.

SPAK

NOTHING

SPAK

MATTER

SPAK

WAH-HAAA! NAIL 'EM!

NOT TOO FAST!

LET'S ENJOY THIS!

ESCAPING THE GRAVE: DEATH AND LIFE!

DAN JURGENS writer PETE WOODS art & color TRAVIS LANHAM letters
cover by BERNARD CHANG & MARCELO MAIOLO
ROB LEVIN assistant editor JIM CHADWICK editor

I came here to rescue Dana.

DRILL 'EM!

GET A CAMERA!

WE SHOULD PUT THIS ONLINE!

All I did was make things worse.

With the Batman suit trashed, sneaking in as one of the Jokerz was my only option.

Now--wait.

SPAK

TSSS

Hard to tell upside down...

...but that looks like...

THIS IS TAKIN' TOO LONG! GET MORE ACID!

Matt?

Max let my little brother come here?

Have to get out--but how?

Got too dependent on Bruce and the suit's capabilities.

Now it's up to me...

...and I'm comin' up empty.

TSSs

Unless...

My belt.

Gotta swing-- keep moving...

I'M COMIN', TERRY!

HEY!

AHH!

OH MY GOD THAT BURNS!

HOLD ON, DANA.

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE!

SORRY!

GOT LOST IS ALL!

Yeah.

Still in the game.

"HOLD ON"? LIKE I HAVE A CHOICE?

HE'S *CHEATING!*

NO ONE *FRISKED* 'IM?

WE'RE AS GOOD AS OUT OF HERE.

WE ARE--?!

UNLESS YOU HAVE SPECIAL TRAINING--!

MORE OR LESS.

DON'T DROP ME!

"ROOF ACCESS SHOULD BE..."

WON'T BE LONG...

ROOF ACCESS

"UH-OH. SOMEONE'S IN THAT ROOM."

"CAN'T LET THAT SLOW ME DOWN!"

...UNTIL I HAVE EVERYTHING *WAYNE* HAD.

"HEY, THAT LOOKED LIKE...

"...THE JOKER?

"BUT--HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR *YEARS!*

"NO TIME TO WORRY 'BOUT THAT NOW. NOT WHEN--"

OH.

WHO'S THE *KID?*

YOU DEAL WITH YOUR PROBLEMS...

...I'LL DEAL WITH *MINE.*

TERRY! YOU SAID YOU COULD GET US *OUT* OF HERE!

I DIDN'T SAY IT WOULD BE *EASY.*

GYAHH!

WHATCHA GOT IN THERE, PIP-SQUEAK?

THAT'S *MINE!*

NOT ANYMORE!

THINK AGAIN.

EH?

WAY TO GO, BRO!

WHAT'RE YOU *DOING* HERE, *MATT?*

IT ISN'T *SAFE!*

ME AND MAX REALIZED YOU NEEDED *HELP!*

MAX GIBSON IS IN ON THIS, *TOO?*

I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, MATTY, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE SKILL TO--

NOT *ME!*

WHAT'S IN THE *BAG!*

A DEVELOPMENTAL THING WE FOUND IN THE *CAVE!*

CAVE??

THIS *WORKS?*

YOU CAN'T--

I MEAN, THAT *SUIT.*

ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU'RE...

...YOU'RE...

GET TO THE ROOF!

KILL EVERY ONE OF 'EM!

I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO FIND OUT THIS WAY, DANA.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT... I WAS WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO TELL YOU AND, WELL...

LIKE YOU WERE GOING TO TELL ME YOU'RE *ALIVE?*

YOU'VE BEEN *LYING* TO ME FOR *YEARS!*

I'M SORRY.

TRULY, I AM.

BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO DISCUSS IT.

I SEE IT, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

SCHAAA...

...WAYYY!

THE *BAT* MUSTA BEEN HERE ALL ALONG!

HE *SAVED* 'EM!

MEANS HE GETS TO DIE, TOO!

BURN 'EM!

TOMMY TWO TEETH JUST NOW · Holy shit!, it's BAT

CROSS TERMINAL...

...AND IT'S THE *LAST* MISTAKE YOU MAKE!

The Jokerz unload with everything they've got.

BRRT

BRRTTT

BRRT

Not one hundred percent sure this new gear can take it but I have to try.

TING

TANNG

PRING

This must've been one of Bruce's prototypes.

WHOA!

Wings are lighter than before.

Make for a better offensive weapon.

TIME FOR THE ROASTERS.

MELT THEM WINGS!

BULLETS AIN'T ENOUGH.

Speaking of offense, stun grenades should end this.

Hope they're still in compartment four.

Huh?

Are these pills or did Bruce miniaturize them?

BWHOOM

Question answered.

Wouldn't want to swallow those.

Wait.

Kind of dizzy. Like... I'm sensing something?

No... I'm seeing... sound?

Like... radar?

Guys climbing the building?

There they are.

A sound imaging alert system.

Face it, Terry.

Your new ride...

has all the candy.

LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS COULD USE SOME CLIMBING TOOLS.

GYAHH!

WHOOPS! SORRY, GENTS.

AIM ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE!

ANY CLOSER AND SHE DIES!

CLOSER?

DON'T NEED TO.

FIPT FIPT

UH.

PAP

PAP

CREEP!

REMEMBER ME?

WE MET A DAY OR SO AGO.

GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT.

ERKH.

GUH.

YOU BURIED ME IN RUBBLE.

TRIED TO BREAK MY SPINE.

ALMOST KILLED ME.

FAHHH.

NOT VERY NEIGHBORLY OF YOU.

I WAS INSULTED.

DEEPLY, DEEPLY OFFENDED.

KRUH.

BRAKT

SO YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE...

...MY SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE REACTION.

YEAH!

A LITTLE MORE TO KEEP YOU BREATHING, WAYNE.

I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE WHEN I'M SO CLOSE TO HAVING WHAT I WANT.

ESPECIALLY WHEN THIS--THE GREATEST *JOKE* EVER...

...IN WHICH A LEGION OF SIMPLETONS THINK I'M BRINGING THE *JOKER* BACK TO LIFE...

...IS ABOUT TO *PAY OFF!*

TERMINAL!

BATMAN IS HERE!

ON THE ROOF! TOOK OUT OUR WHOLE CREW!

I CAN'T BE INTERFERED WITH NOW.

GET THE FLIER.

WE'RE *LEAVING.*

TERRY.

YOU REALLY ARE...

I KNOW IT'S A SHOCK, DANA. BUT... YEAH.

I'M *BATMAN.*

SINCE WHEN? MONTHS, OR--?

LONGER.

SINCE HIGH SCHOOL.

YOU'VE BEEN LYING TO ME...*FOR YEARS?*

I HAD TO. IT WAS FOR YOUR OWN--

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAY IT WAS FOR MY OWN GOOD I SWEAR I'LL--

YOU DID IT FOR *YOU!*

CAN YOU GUYS DEAL WITH THIS SAPPY STUFF LATER?

TERMINAL IS RIGHT DOWNSTAIRS!

MATT'S RIGHT. WE CAN'T LET HIM REVIVE THE *JOKER!*

I EVEN HEARD HIM TALKIN'...

"...'BOUT BRUCE WAYNE!"

WHAT'RE WE DOIN' *HERE*, BOSS?

HEAD FOR THE TOP LEVEL.

WE'LL BE LANDING THERE.

LAND...HOW? THERE ISN'T ANY PLACE TO--

THE OWNER'S SUITE.

IT'LL BE OPEN IN A MOMENT.

A RETINA SCAN FROM THE JOKER CAN DO *THAT?*

DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS.

JUST *LAND.*

YOU GOT IT, BOSS.

GONE!

AND HE TOOK THE JOKER WITH HIM!

WHY'S HE TRYIN' TA BRING THAT MANIAC BACK TA LIFE ANYWAY?

THE JOKER AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAVE ALWAYS DEFIED EXPLANATION.

HAVE TO HOPE THERE'S SOME KIND OF CLUE AS TO WHERE THEY WENT.

WHA--?

WHY WOULD HE HAVE BRUCE'S FINGERPRINT ON FILE?

BRUCE WAYNE

UNLESS...

NO.

IT CAN'T...

...POSSIBLY...

SUBJECT IDENTITY CONFIRMED AS BRUCE WAYNE.

RETINA SCAN *CONFIRMED.*

FINGERPRINT SCAN *CONFIRMED.*

DNA TEST *CONFIRMED.*

BRUCE WAYNE IS *ALIVE!*

ESCAPING THE GRAVE: MOMENT OF TRUTH

DAN JURGENS writer BERNARD CHANG artist MARCELO MAIOLO colorist
TRAVIS LANHAM letters cover by CHANG & MAIOLO
ROB LEVIN assistant editor JIM CHADWICK editor

DECADES FROM NOW

We thought Bruce Wayne was dead.

Moments ago, I learned otherwise.

Bruce is alive.

The question is--how?

He died--or so we thought--during the attack of the cyborgs.

WE'RE GETTING OVERRUN HERE, BRUCE! WE NEED *HELP!*

DOING WHAT WE CAN, TERRY.

Bruce was coordinating the defense from a Wayne-Powers monitor installation.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARIS IS LOST! ASSUME THE WORST!

ISSUE THE EVACUATION ORDER FOR LONDON *NOW!*

PULL THE ENTIRE SATELLITE FORCE OVER EUROPE AND CONCENTRATE FIRE ON THE APPROACHING SHIPS.

IT'S THEIR LAST HOPE.

Worthy try, but Brother Eye was the ultimate opponent.

He hacked the satellites' defense mechanisms and turned them against each other.

EVERYONE OUT!!

A few ships got through Gotham's cloaking shield. When they located the bunker...

WE'RE DONE FOR, TERRY.

DON'T SAY THAT! THERE MUST BE--!

SHAKA-KOOM

FROM NOW ON, IT'S UP TO--

WHOOM

--YOU-- UHN!

BRUCE?

BRUCE?!

That was the last thing I ever heard him say.

By the time I got there, it was nothing but incinerated rubble.

From all indications, there were no survivors.

None.

We assumed the **worst.**

A day or two later, Spellbinder took me off the board.

In the chaos of war, no one had time to make sure the dead were actually dead.

I HAVE THE INFORMATION YOU REQUESTED, TERRY.

LET'S HEAR IT, MAX.

I TAPPED INTO A FLIGHT TRACKER'S LOG OF EVERYTHING FLYING OVER GOTHAM IN THE LAST HALF HOUR.

AND?

A SMALL TRANSPORT LEFT "NO LAUGHING MATTER" SEVENTEEN MINUTES AGO.

WENT STRAIGHT TO THE WAYNE-POWERS BUILDING.

TERMINAL.

FOR SURE!

I HAVE TO BELIEVE BRUCE IS WITH HIM.

I'M AT THE BUILDING NOW.

WHY WOULD THEY GO THERE?

MY GUESS--THEY'RE AFTER *KEYSTONE.*

SOMETHING NO ONE IS EVEN SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT.

SECURITY: REQUESTING ACCESS.

CODE 1-10-99.

VOICE AUTHENTICATED AS McGINNIS, TERRY.

ACCESS GRANTED.

PSSHH

Bruce built Keystone as the world's ultimate intel gathering device.

If Terminal discovered its existence it'd explain why he came here...

...as well as why he'd keep Bruce **alive.**

I'M ON THE CUSP OF HAVING *EVERYTHING.*

I THOUGHT YOU ALREADY HAD THAT, TERMINAL, BEIN' YOU WUZ THE BOSS OF *JOKERZ TOWN!*

NOTHING BUT A PATH TO A MUCH MORE REWARDING GOAL.

MORE THAN BRINGING *THE JOKER* BACK TO LIFE?

YOU'RE STANDING IN THE WAYNE-POWERS COMPLEX, SIMPLETON.

AMONG ITS MANY PURSUITS, IT SUPPLIES NETWORKING AND DATA SERVICES TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.

THOUGH YOU PROBABLY CAN'T COMPREHEND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THAT.

MEANS YOU WANT IN ON THAT, RIGHT?

WHAT'S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THAT THERE IS A DEVICE INSIDE *COLLECTING* EVERY FACET OF ALL THAT.

KEYSTONE.

PROVIDING AN *OPEN HIGHWAY* TO EVERY COMPUTER ON EARTH.

DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT HAS TO DO WITH *THE JOKER,* BUT IT SURE *SOUNDS* IMPRESSIVE.

YOUR IGNORANCE NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME.

I AM SOMETIMES SURPRISED YOU CAN FUNCTION AS A BARELY COMPETENT JANITOR.

SORRY, BOSS.

OUR PATIENT IS *THE TICKET* TO ALL THIS!

HIS GENIUS PUTS THE *WORLD* AT MY FINGERTIPS!

I TOLD THE JOKERZ I WAS BRINGING THE JOKER BACK TO LIFE SO I'D HAVE A LEGION OF ACOLYTES WILLING TO GET ME WHATEVER I NEEDED...

...TO KEEP WAYNE *ALIVE.*

WAYNE?

ARE YOU SAYING--?

THIS AIN'T *THE JOKER?*

OF COURSE NOT, YOU INFANTILE SIMPLETON.

THAT IS BRUCE WAYNE.

WHY WOULD *ANYONE* WANT TO BRING THE *JOKER* BACK TO LIFE?

THE WORLD IS *FAR* BETTER OFF WITHOUT *HIM!*

YOU SURE HAD US FOOLED, BOSS.

BUT-- *WHY?*

THINK BACK TO THE WAR.

AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACK, GOTHAM WAS ABLE TO BEAT THE CYBORGS BACK AND GET OUR CLOAKING SHIELD UP AND RUNNING.

BUT WE'D BEEN HIT HARD.

"TRIAGE TENTS LITTERED THE CITY. NO ONE HAD TIME TO TAKE NAMES.

"IT WAS PATCH, BANDAGE AND MOVE ON.

"MY OWN WOUNDS WERE MINIMAL."

NEXT PATIENT. AT THIS MAN'S AGE HE'S UNLIKELY TO LIVE, NO MATTER WHAT WE DO.

"THEY DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE OLD COOT THEY'D PASSED ON.

"BUT I DID.

"WAYNE.

I KNOW OPPORTUNITY WHEN I SEE IT SO I SPIRITED HIM AWAY, WITH NO ONE THE WISER.

BUT KEEPING HIM ALIVE WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES.

WHAT BETTER WAY TO GET THEM THAN BY CONVINCING THE JOKER'S FAN CLUB THAT I WAS BRINGING THEIR IDOL BACK TO LIFE?

ALL SO YOU COULD STEAL WAYNE'S FORTUNE?

IN PART.

BUT THE REAL GOAL IS *KEYSTONE.*

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND THE PROPER BRICK TO TRIGGER THE PROCESS...

YOU GOT THIS ALL FIGGERED OUT, DON'TCHA, BOSS?

OF COURSE. ENGAGE VOICE MODULATOR.

SECURITY: REQUESTING ACCESS.

CODE 1-10-99.

CLIKT

VOICE AUTHENTICATED AS WAYNE, BRUCE.

SOUNDED JUST LIKE HIM!

SIMPLE TO SPLICE COMMENTS TOGETHER FROM HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES.

FURTHER IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED.

SUBMIT PALM PRINT.

DEET

SUBMIT RETINA SCAN.

DEET

SUBJECT FULLY AUTHENTICATED AS WAYNE, BRUCE.

ACCESS *GRANTED.*

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I WILL *FINALLY HAVE IT ALL.*

AW.

I'M TOUCHED.

NEVER KNEW YOU WERE THAT FOND OF ME, TERMMY!

BATMAN?!

YEP.

ONCE I REALIZED YOU HAD WAYNE IN YOUR PLAYPEN...

...I FIGURED YOU WERE PROBABLY SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW ABOUT KEYSTONE.

IT'D BE THE ONLY THING THAT'D EXPLAIN...

...WHY YOU WERE KEEPING WAYNE ALIVE.

NICE IDEA...

...BUT YOU'LL *NEVER* GET YOUR HANDS ON IT.

IF YOU THINK I'M SIMPLY A *BRAIN*...

...A MAN OF LIMITED RESOURCES...

...YOU ARE *WRONG!*

I AM *NOT* WITHOUT MY RESOURCES!

NICE TRY, BUT A COUPLE OF BELTS CAN'T--

SHRAKK

GYAH!!!

I WON'T BE *CHEATED.*

NOT WHEN I'M SO *CLOSE!*

--KAFF--

WAKEY, WAKEY.

I WANT YOU TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING, OLD FRIEND.

LOVE, LOVE, *LOVE* THE MAKEUP JOB, BY THE WAY.

KEYSTONE!

IT'S HERE!!

I-- AWPP!

YOU'VE LOST, YOU SICK FREAK.

KEEPING WAYNE DRUGGED AND ALIVE LIKE YOU DID...

...IT'S INHUMAN!

LIGHTEN UP, YOU CHEAP IMPOSTER.

THE REAL BATMAN KNEW HOW TO APPRECIATE A GOOD JOKE!

EH?

CONSIDER MR. WAYNE'S PLIGHT.

THESE CHAIRS ARE *NOTORIOUSLY* TRICKY.

IF ITS ANTI-GRAV DRIVE SHOULD CONK OUT AT THE WRONG TIME...

YOUR... VOICE...

...OR, GOD FORBID, GET SHUT *OFF--!*

CLICK

YOU... CAN'T BE... AL...AL...

WHY, I SHUDDER TO THINK...

...OF THE CONSEQUENCES.

BRUUUCE!!

NO!

COMING!

TIME TO *LEAVE*, TERMINAL.

WHERE TO, BOSS?

NORTH. *AWAY* FROM THIS GODFORSAKEN CITY.

McGINNIS! *FORGET ME!*

GET THE *JANITOR!*

ARE YOU FOR *REAL?*

HE MUSTN'T *ESCAPE!*

ALMOST...

COURSE LAID IN.

FULL SPEED!

GOTCHA!

I TOLD YOU TO *LEAVE* ME!

NICE TO SEE YOU, TOO, OLD BUDDY.

ALMOST...

IF YOU REALIZED WHO...

...YOU'D HAVE LET ME FALL.

"NOT WHEN I HAVE BACKUP, BRUCE."

THEY'RE ALMOST OUT OF RANGE, MATT.

DON'T WORRY, MAX.

I HAVE A LOCK ON 'EM.

THEY'RE GOIN' *NOWHERE.*

CHUFFT

DOES THIS THING HAVE PARACHUTES?

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING AB--

CHOOM

ENGAGE STABILIZERS!

DONE-- BUT ALL IT'S GONNA DO IS BUY US A FEW MINUTES!

GOT 'EM!

STILL AIRBORNE BUT THEY WON'T GET FAR.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE REALLY *ALIVE.*

ARE YOU *OKAY?*

PHYSICALLY, *YEAH.*

LET'S GET YOU TO THE HOSP--

FORGET *ME.*

GO.

FIND TERMINAL.

HE CAN WAIT.

YOU'RE WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW.

BUT--

WOULD YOU *RELAX?*

BE HUMAN FOR JUST *ONCE* IN YOUR LIFE?

BUT--

EMBRACE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE *ALIVE* AND *WELL?*

THIS ONE TIME...

...THE BAD GUYS CAN *WAIT.*

TERRY--

THIS IS A *GREAT DAY,* BRUCE!

YOU'RE *BACK...*

...AND THE JOKER IS STILL *DEAD.*

ABOUT THAT.

EPILOGUE

DAMN.

WON'T BE EASY TO GET THIS THING BACK IN THE AIR.

NO DOUBT.

YOU WERE A *FOOL* TO THINK YOU COULD BEAT *WAYNE.*

TALK TO ME LIKE THAT AGAIN AND YOU'RE A DEAD MAN.

GRAB THAT CROWBAR AND HELP ME PULL THIS PANEL OFF.

USING THE *JOKER'S* NAME WAS CRAZY.

I SHOULD KNOW.

NOT LIKE THAT LUNATIC CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

NOW, GET TO WORK!

IF YOU SAY SO.

NO ONE USES THE JOKER'S NAME!

NO ONE USES--

--MY NAME!

HA HA HA HA HA HAHHH!

--GKK--

--H--HELPPP--

OF COURSE.

BATMAN NEVER *COULD...*

...NOR WILL HE *EVER...*

...KILL *ME!*

AHAHAHA

BATMAN BEYOND

VARIANT COVER GALLERY

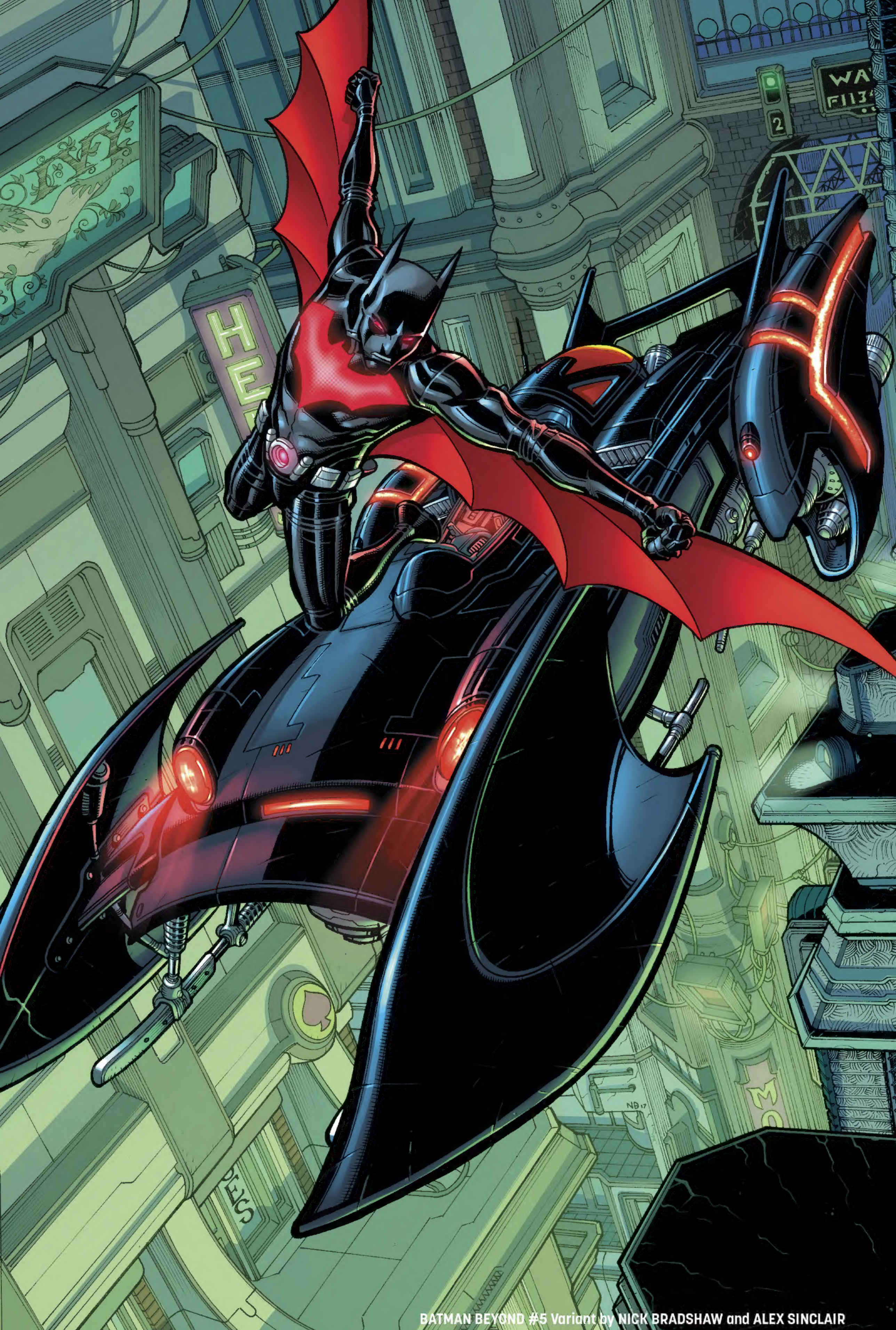
BATMAN BEYOND: REBIRTH #1 Variant by CARLOS D'ANDA

BATMAN BEYOND #1 Variant by MARTIN ANSIN

BATMAN BEYOND #2 Variant by MARTIN ANSIN

BATMAN BEYOND #3 Variant by DUSTIN NGUYEN

BATMAN BEYOND #4 Variant by DUSTIN NGUYEN



BATMAN BEYOND #5 Variant by NICK BRADSHAW and ALEX SINCLAIR

"This series admirably captures the tone of the beloved animated series and seems poised to potentially take things to a much darker place than its predecessor ever could." **IGN**

THE CLOWN PRINCE RETURNS...

The end of the world was just the beginning.

As the future Gotham City recovers from global catastrophe, a familiar face is ready to wear the cowl of the Batman once again. Terry McGinnis has returned to defend his city as Batman, and his family and friends couldn't be happier.

But another resurrection threatens to destroy all Terry holds dear. Rumors are spreading like wildfire that the original Joker lives–and the brutal crime lord called Terminal and his sadistic gang of Jokerz are waging war in the streets to prepare for the Clown Prince's second coming.

Just days after becoming Batman again, Terry must take up the fight against the greatest foe he's ever faced. When the dust clears, will the joke be on him?

Writer **DAN JURGENS** (ACTION COMICS), artist **BERNARD CHANG** (GREEN LANTERN CORPS) and colorist **MARCELO MAIOLO** (GREEN LANTERN CORPS) bring Terry McGinnis' Batman back to the future in BATMAN BEYOND VOLUME 1: ESCAPING THE GRAVE as a part of DC Rebirth! Collects BATMAN BEYOND: REBIRTH #1 and BATMAN BEYOND #1-5 in this great new jumping-on-point graphic novel!

dccomics.com

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"